



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Schools encouraged to take the Wisconsin School Breakfast Challenge

*Effort aims to increase the number of school breakfasts served by 50 percent*

MADISON—The Department of Public Instruction, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin–Extension, is encouraging all schools in Wisconsin to participate in the School Breakfast Challenge. The goal of the state challenge is to increase the number of school breakfasts served by 50 percent during the 2008-09 school year. Schools that have the highest percentage increase in breakfasts served will be recognized in the fall of 2009.

The state challenge aims to continue recent growth in the number of school breakfasts served to students in Wisconsin. “Wisconsin schools served nearly 1.8 million more breakfasts in 2007-08 than in the 2006-07 academic year, and we have now seen three consecutive years of growth in breakfasts served,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. “A hungry child can’t learn. It is encouraging to see that our school breakfast programs are helping end hunger in the classroom, so students can concentrate on their classes.”

The DPI and the UW-Extension have worked collaboratively to help school districts implement or improve school breakfast programs throughout the state. Through this challenge, the partnership will continue efforts to help increase school breakfast participation by 50 percent in existing school breakfast buildings or to help implement a school breakfast program in school sites that currently do not offer breakfast. Succeeding in this challenge represents investing in the future of school children by providing them with a nutritious meal that will help them succeed in school.

U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl also stated his support of the Wisconsin School Breakfast Challenge. As chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture Appropriations, Kohl initiated a Wisconsin grant program to help local schools begin and enhance school breakfast programs. The Kohl breakfast grant

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program has delivered \$4.7 million in funding to Wisconsin schools since 2001. Kohl also introduced a bill to authorize grants for the establishment or enhancement of school breakfast programs nationwide.

“The link between good nutrition and a child’s ability to learn is incredibly important. It troubles me to imagine children in Wisconsin, or anywhere in the nation, whose success in the classroom is diminished by hunger,” said Kohl. “That’s why I’ve made school lunch and school breakfast a priority and will continue to do so in the future.”

During the 2001-02 school year, the state began allocating \$1.1 million each year to partially reimburse school districts for the costs of breakfast programs at 10 cents per breakfast served. In the 2007-09 state budget, Burmaster requested and the legislature approved increasing the reimbursement to 15 cents per breakfast served. However, since 2005-06, because of the growth of school breakfast in Wisconsin, the reimbursement has been pro-rated to an amount less than authorized. Burmaster has requested increased funding in the 2009-11 budget for state aids to school districts and private schools to fully fund the current state reimbursement rate for the School Breakfast Program at 15 cents for each breakfast served.

“By ensuring that no child has to go hungry to class, we will help our students improve their achievement and help close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their peers,” said Burmaster. “There are also health benefits: school breakfast programs help children learn more healthful eating habits, which is crucial in the fight against childhood obesity.”

Districts should see <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/brkchlng.html> for information on participating in the School Breakfast Challenge.

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**NOTES:** This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008\\_161.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008_161.pdf). Details about the school breakfast challenge can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/brkchlng.html>. Information about school breakfast in general may be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/sbp1.html>.